

Adult Education Centre Learning in Tanzania: Motives, Challenges and Interventions

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Abstract

The study explored the adult learners' motives and challenges encountered in Tanzania's Integrated Community Based Adult Education (ICBAE) learning centres. Essentially qualitative, the study employed a case study design, with participants selected using purposive and convenient sampling. It collected data using interviews and documentary review before subjecting it to thematic analysis. The study established the main motives among learners for pursuing ICBAE to be the need for economic development, literacy skill development, enhancing entrepreneurship culture, getting recognition, and the desire to improve social relations. Though these adult learning centres were strategically placed, they contended with inadequate human, financial and physical resources. Moreover, adult learners' seasonal attendance during learning sessions presented challenges and undermined the progress registered in addition to threatening a relapse among adult learners into illiteracy. Thus, ensuring the availability of ample human, financial and physical resources is imperative for the adult learners' skills and knowledge development.

Keywords: adult learning, adult education, integrated community-based adult education, adult learning centres

Introduction

Recently, tremendous effort has strived to promote adult education to improve social, economic, cultural and political development (Efemena & Ebeye 2014; Jinna & Maikano, 2014). Such adult education generally forms a sound base for enhancing literacy development, democratic ethos and poverty reduction strategies, which are central pillars for national and individual development and progress. This adult education also helps to change the attitude, behavioural traits and lifestyles amongst a segment of the population traditionally operating on the margins of a modern society. Globally, these efforts have centred on increasing national investment in adult learning and education (UNESCO, 2019). In this regard, the United Nations also support the provision of lifelong learning opportunities to enable individuals to acquire knowledge and skills relevant for accessing opportunities and participating fully and meaningfully in society (UN, 2015). Similarly, in

Tanzania emphasis has been on the enhancing the knowledge and skill based not only among youth but also adults (URT, 2014).

Tanzania, like other countries in Africa and other parts of the world, appreciates the contribution of adult education to socio-economic, cultural and political development. This type of education also fosters the development of individual wellbeing. To ensure the development of individual wellbeing, the government has established various adult education programmes. These programmes include the Complementary Basic Education in Tanzania (COBET), Integrated Community Based Adult Education (ICBAE), Non-formal Secondary Education offered via the Open and Distance Learning (ODL), and Integrated Post Primary Education (IPPE) (URT, 2019). Most of these programmes centre on developing basic literacy skills, vocational skills, and income generating skills. Other initiatives such as ODL focus on expanding opportunities for individuals to pursue ordinary and advanced level secondary education.

The establishment of adult education programmes seek to contribute to widening access to education to most Tanzanians. Statistics indicate that COBET enrolled 134,016; ICBAE, 101,097; IPPE, 5574; and ODL, 5631 (URT, 2019). The establishment of many of these programmes has enabled the increase in the number of adult learning centres. These include 2,457 COBET centres, 1,273 ICBAE centres, 119 IPPE centres, and 126 ODL centres (URT, 2019).

The increase in the number of adults in the established centres might have been influenced by various motives. A survey of various studies shows that most adult learners participate in learning to fulfil socio-economic and political motives (Mushi, 2010; Sargent, 2001; Whitt, 1994). These do not differ from the potentials associated with the provision of adult education. They could also be influenced by the individual intrinsic and extrinsic motives for learning. As the large number of adult learners in established centres in Tanzania, one would be inclined to explore the motives for their turning up to learning.

A reflection on adult enrolment in the established adult learning centres in Tanzania provides a sound justification for continuing to provide adult education in the country. This also demonstrates individual readiness and acceptance of adult education in the country. Yet, there is limited information on the adult learners' experiences in established centres. The limited studies, specifically, on Tanzania indicate challenges from the perspective of adult education programmes. These include the human, financial and the physical challenges (Bhalalusesa, 2004; Bwatwa & Kamwela, 2010; Kway, 2016; Msoroka, 2015; Swai, 1999).

This study, therefore, explicitly explored adult the learners' experiences from the context of the adult learning centre. As such, the study findings would form a basis for discussing adult learners' motives and challenge from the perspective of learning centres. It also reminds adult education practitioners and policy-makers on their roles and responsibilities to create a conducive learning environment to nurture skills and knowledge development of adult learners in the adult learning centres in Tanzania.

Purpose of the study

This study explored motives and challenges of adult learners from the perspective of adult learning centres to determine possible interventions in a bid to address those challenges.

Research questions

- 1.How do learners describe their motives for participating in adult learning programmes through learning centres in Tanzania?
- 2.What challenges do adult learners experience in the established adult learning centres?

Motives for adult learning

Adult learning involves people of diverse ages, roles, abilities, experiences, employment status, gender, identity, level of maturity, and motives for learning (Knowles, 1980; Knowles, Holton & Swanson, 2015; Rothes et al., 2017). Such characteristics form a sound base for understanding adult learners' diversity, objectives for learning and their engagement in the adult educational programme. This also initiates the need for establishing flexible learning mode, inclusive of their social and economic responsibilities (Carré, 2000; Whitt, 1994).

The desire to participate in learning among adults could be influenced by social, economic and political motives (Mushi, 2012; Rothes et al., 2014, 2017; Whitt, 1994). Adult learn to improve their economic status, safeguard their positions, get promotion, secure new jobs, improve efficiency and get salary increase (Mushi, 2012; Onchari, 2016). The unemployment rate and low educational qualifications of adults also serve as an impetus for their enrolment in educational programmes (Rothes et al., 2014). In other words, adult learning is a tool for improving qualifications and an opener to employment opportunities.

On the other hand, learning for socialisation is also observed among adults in various settings (Okech, 2004; Whitts, 1994). This means that they learn order to get new friends, get

life partners and improve their social relations (Mushi, 2010). However, there are those who learn to change attitude (Sargent, 2001). Yet others study to enable them to cope with life challenges such as divorce, lost jobs, loneliness, death of partners, and retirement (Cross, 1981; Mushi, 2010). Their engagement in a social group provides chance to socialise and share their experiences. They are also open new coping mechanisms. Adult learning influence life transformation, transition and impact-making in their communities (Okech, 2004).

Adult learners challenges in the learning centres

Adult learners' experiences in a learning process are not free from challenges. Studies from various parts of the world indicate that adult learners experience socio-economic and institutional challenges (Bhalalusesa, 2004; Bwatwa & Kamwela, 2010, UNESCO, 2003). Some lacked financial backup to support their learning whereas others need the required learning facilities (Machumu, Kalimasi, Msabila, Dominick, Zhu, & Almasi, 2015). A comparative study between Tanzania and Finland noted that adult education practices in the former had inadequate and relevant teaching and learning materials unlike in the latter country where adult learners had full access to learning resources (Kway, 2016). Other studies also indicate that adult learning centres were underfunded and faced human and material resource challenges (Bhalalusesa, 2004; UNESCO, 2003). Accessibility and availability of enough funding is essential for improving physical infrastructure, learning facilities and sustaining facilitators in learning centres.

The presence of untrained facilitators, inadequate number of facilitators and poor coordination of programmes are some of the challenges confronting adult learning in Tanzania (Bhalalusesa, 2004; Bwatwa & Kamwela, 2010; Msoroka, 2015). Yet, adult facilitators require adequate qualifications, mastery in adult education methods, firm grasp of adult psychology, and management skills for such adult learning centres (Abdukarim & Ali, 2012; MacKeracher, Suart & Potter, 2006; Swai, 1999). The absence of these qualifications is detrimental to knowledge and skills development of adult learners.

Further literature review indicates that some adult learning centres fail to support adult learners' realisation of motives because of poor infrastructure, lack of facilities, and exposure to irrelevant programmes (Machobane, 2010; Swai, 1999). In this regard, a conducive learning environment and the development of relevant programmes that accommodate adult learners' needs are crucial in this context. In fact, the failure to support

adult learners' motives undermines their interest and opens the door for dropouts. After all, the success of adult learners also relies on flexible learning schedule as well as academic, psychosocial and financial support (Mohamed & Zulkipli, 2014; Spivey, 2016).

Theoretical framework

The study adopted Cross' (1981) theoretical framework on reasons behind adult participation and non-participation in adult learning. As adult learners have various motives that influence their participation in learning, Cross argues that self-assessment, attitude towards education, expected goals, access to educational opportunities, life transitions and access to information influence adults' decision to participate in the learning programme. Similarly, adults have social and economic motives informing their decisions on the need to study. Sustaining these motives is a function of relevant curriculum, qualified human resources and good learning environment with adequate learning resources and support (Mohamed & Zulkipli, 2014; Spivey, 2016; Swai, 1999).

During learning, adult learners contend with institutional, dispositional (personal) and situational challenges. The dispositional and situational barriers occur outside the institutional walls. However, their consequences are observable during adult learning. The teaching, learning and support practices, which occur in institutional wall, could create a solid base for adult learners' success even beyond their comprehension. Hence, the need to study the adult learners' experiences from the perspective of adult learning centres guided the study to focus on institutional barriers. On this aspect, Cross argues that irrelevant curriculum, lack of experts, distance, poor transport system, and lack of funds to support learning are institutional challenge attributes. Moreover, the absence of proper human, physical and financial support could adversely limit adult the learners' realisation of their motives for learning in the centres (Boeren, 2009). This study, therefore, utilised Cross's theoretical thinking to explore the adult learners' motives and experiences in Tanzania's adult learning centres.

Methodology

Research approach and design

The study used qualitative approach to generate rich data from the natural context of adult learning centres. The case study of IBCAE programme facilitated the exploration of adult learners' experiences at the learning centres. The ICBAE programme, as a case study, involved adult learners studying literacy programme and development and Income

Generating Projects. As such, this study was unique relative to other programmes such as IPPE, ODL and COBET, which involved diversified groups of children, youth and adults.

ICBAE programme

ICBAE programme started as a pilot project in the 1990s. It was later applied to most of the regions in Tanzania. The programme aimed to empower people in the communities to develop basic literacy skills as well as income generating skills (Hanemann, 2017). The learning process took place in the public primary school buildings and any other areas where the arrangements were in place. The research was carried out in study circles conducted three times a week in the afternoon and evening hours (Hanemann, 2017; Mushi, 2012).

The study employed a Regenerated Freirean Literacy Empowering Community Techniques (REFLECT) and UNESCO Triple A of Assessment Analysis and Action (Bhalalusesa, 2004; URT, 2000) mostly as facilitation approaches. The REFLECT approach enables learners to work together and facilitators use manual, newspapers, alphabet books to teach literacy (Mushi, 2012; Swai, 1999). The mode of teaching focuses on participatory approaches. Adult learners are guided to analyse community challenges, design learning activities, participate in problem-solving and plan income generating activities. It is also indicated that adult learners had opportunities for participate in skill development in areas such as masonry, carpentry, tailoring, livestock keeping, bee-keeping, fish-pond preparation, gardening, shoe repairing, running salons and tree planting (Hanemann , 2017; Mushi, 2012). Practical sessions enable adults to develop their projects and, thus, improve their income generation. The case study design was relevant in this context as it explored rich and detailed information from selected settings (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Yin, 2014).

Area of the study

The study was conducted in Arusha region. The region was selected for its effectiveness in establishing ICBAE centres. Arusha region ranked first on the list of regions providing ICBAE as it had 237 centres (7 non-governmental and 230 governmental centres). Singida region was second with 184 and Iringa with 105 centres (URT, 2019). So presence of many ICBAE centres in Arusha influenced the researcher to select the region to explore the adult learners' experiences.

Sample and sampling procedures

The study used purposive and convenience sampling procedures. In all, 32 respondents from two ICBAE centres participated in the study. The use of a small sample was among the characteristics of the qualitative research which centres on getting rich and relevant information on the study (Gay, Mills & Airasian, 2012). The study sampled 24 adult learners from three adult learning centres located in Arusha District Council and Arusha City Council. A Convenience sampling was used to select adult participants. The adult learners' inconsistency in coming to the centres made the study to use convenience sample to include those adults, who were available during the time of study. Moreover, the study purposively selected four facilitators (2 from each centre) and two programme co-ordinators. Furthermore, the study involved two education officials from the regional administrative level. These were selected by virtue of their positions as programme overseers, policy-makers, facilitators and project implementors.

Data collection methods

The study used semi-structured interviews and documentary review. Semi-structured interviews helped to solicit information from the study participants. These semi-structured interviews were conducted between 30 and 60 minutes. It enabled the researcher to probe for more information if the participants were not elaborate enough (Creswell, 2014). Most of the interviews were conducted at the learning centres where facilitators and adult learners were physically present. The education officials were followed at their workplaces. They helped to clarify on issues associated with learning infrastructures, human resources and financial issues. A review of the book register, a report on activities from adult learning centres and other policy documents from the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology yielded more insights and complementary information to the data obtained using the interviews.

Data analysis process

The information generated was subjected to thematic analysis. The process of data collection and mini-analysis of data conducted in the field familiarised the researcher with the data generated. The use of thematic analysis emphasised on familiarisation of data collected from the field (Boyatzis, 1998). Subsequently, the researcher re-examined the verbatim transcriptions, coded the data, organised and summarised the information collected through the semi-structured interviews. Comparison was also made to the analysed data from

documentary review and observations. The whole process, therefore, enabled the study to inductively generate themes which are presented here below.

Study Findings

Adult learners' motives

The study findings show that only two kinds of motives were more dominant among adult learners: Economic and social motives.

Economic motives

The findings indicate that Adult learners' involvement in adult learning centres (ICABE) were mostly associated with the desire to improve their economic status. In this regard, most of the adult learners reported not have permanent jobs as they were involved in petty businesses, street vending and shop-keeping. Others were tour guides, drivers, house maids, farmers, and housewives. As such, many of them were optimistic that their engagement in adult education would increase their openings to earn more income. Their wish was, therefore, aligned with the overall object of ICBAE, which was to develop individual capacity for income generating (Hanemann, 2017; Mushi, 2012). One of the learners said:

I must come to classes to improve my finances. I am a housewife and I don't have any source of income. I cannot secure any employment as I am not educated. I was convinced by my friends that through ICBAE classes I can transform my life. So, I joined ICBAE and I am done with first part of reading, writing and counting. We are now learning in the Batik Making project. I think this learning opportunity will lead me to have my own project, which will enable me to have a good source of income.

This statement suggests that there was hope for improving skills and improving future income. Knowing the basic literacy was just a foundation of the main desire to improve their economic wellbeing. The facilitators and education officers from the region also reported that most of the adult learners enrolled in ICBAE programme because of income generating activities. They also said that other activities such as irrigation projects, English language programme, honey processing projects, soap-making and gardening were incentives for their

participation in learning. Hence they strived to boost their income by enrolling in ICBAE programmes to become much more production and skill development.

Embracing entrepreneurship culture

The study findings show that adult learners in Arusha region joined classes as they wanted to improve their entrepreneurship skills and embracing their long-lasting culture of doing businesses. They reported that they wanted to be more professional by engaging in ICBAE. In this regard, one participant said:

People in Arusha are entrepreneurs in nature. Everyone is busy selling or doing some activities, which brings more income. We don't have entrepreneurship skills worth improving our businesses. I sell beads to tourists. But I was told I need to be more innovative to attract market. When I heard about ICBAE I thought it was time for improvement. I am glad that we have practical sessions and we are selling many things.

Developing entrepreneurship skills and improving hands-on practices were potential for improving the culture among the adults in the region. Adult facilitators confirmed that most of the learners in their classes were targeting tourism business. Given the high competition and demands for skills in business, made most of adult learners feel that they were unqualified and, hence, in need of additional skills equal to the market demands. Consequently, some formed groups and requested the municipality to support their learning needs. The municipal support extended to the groups by audit the class and organising better learning sessions, which induced an increase of many adult learning classes in the region. The review of documents indicated that ICBAE included basic literacy and post literacy with components of Extension Services, Income Generation and Vocational Training (URT, 2019). This support to income generating projects was central to the learning of the adult.

Enhancing skill development

The findings from the study also indicate that adult learners were inclined to improve their skills and apply them in various contexts. One of the learners said:

...I need to develop good farming skills and become a supplier of grain in this area. In my class, facilitators are inviting specialists to guide us on good farming techniques. They bring the actual things for us to see. For example, tools, fertilizers and modern seeds which could enable one to get high yield.

The use of specialists as guest speakers was a good strategy for enhancing skill development in the class of adults. These provided real examples during class demonstrations. This supported their extrinsic motive of the adult learners, who wished to become well-known suppliers of grain. The desire was further supported by the economic needs.

Improving basic literacy skills

Adult learners also reported participating in ICBAE programme to master skills on reading, writing and numeracy. Most of the adult learners in the selected centres were people, who were selling different kinds of products in retail shops and the streets as well as those who sold products in markets. Some of the adult participants were pastoralists and farmers. They all needed basic literacy skills to do simple arithmetic and read crucial business-related information. They also needed to count their cash, exchange products and count their animals in the farms.

As for businesspeople, they needed basic literacy for interacting with clients. They felt ashamed to be illiterate and it made them to feel inferior when it came to reading tax calculations and business-related documents or managing their transactions. Hence, basic literacy was an essential solution to their challenges. One of the adult learners said: “I did not know how to read and write. This gave me energy to agree to participate in ICBAE when I was informed by a Ward Education Co-ordinator (WEC) who visited our business centre.” This statement underscores the importance of using people with authority to convince those without basic literacy to enrol in adult learning centres. A statement by authorities contributed substantially to the efforts to reduce illiteracy rate in the country. A proper source of information was essential in making an informed decision. This motive is cross-cutting as it has economic values, social and psychological values.

Social motives

Recognition

The need to be recognised and appreciated by colleagues and people from their context influenced the adult to enrol in classes. The lack of education made some of them to feel inferior. Hence, their desire to learn was associated with recognition for being learned adults. So this also fuelled their desire to learn and complete the learning circle. One of them said: “I joined the class because I wanted to show my friends and relatives that I also attended

ICBAE programme, I can read and I also have an activity to do.” Recognition was at the heart of these adult learners’ thirst to quench their learning needs. They felt ashamed to be dubbed ‘illiterates’. Indeed, literacy development is a necessary component in the 21st century and serves as a tool for fostering lifelong learning. Hence, the psychological satisfaction was an impetus for adult participation in ICBAE programme.

Association with others

The desire to come together for socialisation purposes was also noted. The findings show that adults wished for accomplishing their social goals such as having friends and networking. One of the learners explained that her friend’s stories influenced her decision to study in the adult learning programme. In the study groups, she reported, adult learners helped each other by addressing their socio-economic challenges. Those stories instilled the desire to be part of the group in the learning context. As a result, they were able to have an opportunity to access education and, thus, have recourse to long-term contacts in addition to interacting socially and economically.

Coping with life events

The findings from adult learners illuminated on their motives to participate in learning, which emerged to have been contributed by life events. In life, they reportedly witnessed many bad situations such as divorce, long-term illnesses, and even death of their immediate family members—husband and children (Cross, 1981; Mushi, 2010). Sometimes they failed to cope with the situation. Thus, they needed a social group to help them heal and feel a sense of belongingness. One of the adult learners said:

My husband died some few years ago. I experienced so much grieve. I was alone and I wished I could have people around me. But the moment, I joined ICBAE programme. I felt a difference. I feel like I belong to the group forever. I have managed to start new friendship. I feel am light now and I am happy to attend classes.

The state of bereavement to this learner created a sense of isolation and, thus, needed to look for a social support. Hence participation in adult learning centre contributed to enduring the pains and felt love when interacting with new friends. It also provided comfort and social support. The study findings indicate that during learning, they counselled each other and

shared their experiences. This enabled them to create social groups and cultivate a sense of belonging, which was an essential component in facilitating and enabling their learning.

Challenges in adult learning centres

The findings from interviews and documentary review revealed that the institutional challenges had negative impact on the learning of adult learners in ICBAE centres. This enabled the study to map out the institutional factors, which Cross (1981) described as part of the institutional barriers to learning. The challenges were as presented here below.

Inadequate skilled and qualified facilitators

The study findings show that the adult learning centres had inadequate skilled facilitators. Most of the facilitators were either form six or form four leavers without any additional academic qualifications. However, some had knowledge on income generating activities. These facilitators needed additional skills relevant for adding value to adult learning. Moreover, the centres facilitators were volunteers. One of the facilitators said:

Me and my colleague are volunteers. We were invited by the municipality to establish this class. We are using our experiences to run the centres. We have completed Form Six. But we have passion to see adults develop various skills.

Running the adult learning centres requires experience and expertise as they are unique in terms of their characteristics and learning needs. Implicitly, there was a case of inadequacy in skills on the facilitators to manage a class of adults. They used their personal skills to support adults. Teaching in ICBAE centres require them to at least know Regenerated Freirean Literacy Empowering Community Techniques (REFLECT) and UNESCO Triple A or Assessment Analysis and Action (URT, 2000). This is contrary to the lack of skills observed among centre facilitators.

The study findings noted the presence of co-ordinators whose role was to oversee the established study centres. These were qualified primary school teachers but who were not centre facilitators. Surprisingly, the co-ordinators attended a training course on facilitation in ICBAE programme but they had a different role to perform. It is indeed risky not to use experienced facilitators to support literacy skill development. There is a danger of not meeting adult learners' needs.

Limited financial resources

The findings also show that adult learning centres had inadequate access to financial resources. The expectation was that district councils and the education offices would have a specific budget to support adult education. There were limited funds allocated to support the educational system. In this regard, the study revealed that more efforts were placed in financing the formal system and less on non-formal education system which was for adult learners. One of the education officers said: “The funds allocated were quite minimal and one needed to prioritize. Once you did that you would find that all the resources were channelled to formal education. So, the Non formal education continues being under funded”. Such limited commitment to funding the non-formal education was quite detrimental to the success of the adult learners. The same was echoed by UNESCO (2003) when describing the challenges adult education programmes face. The findings also indicate that the centre volunteers (facilitators) were paid 50,000/= per month as honoraria. The amount was hardly sufficient to cover their social and economic needs. One of the centre facilitators said:

It is only passion for teaching and lack of employment opportunities which made me continue working here. It is hard to explain but just know I, sometimes, stay without receiving any honoraria for a long time. When you ask, you are told they are processing funds. This partly discourages my decision to support learning.

One could see the desperation and discouragement resulting from the low pay. This scenario could also impact on their volunteerism spirit and leave adult learners without support. Despite their limited skills, they were valued primarily because of their roles in the centres. The lack of financial support posed a challenge to acquisition of the materials and equipment needed to be implementing the income generating projects. Consequently, the adult learners could not hold practical sessions. Similarly, there were delays in completing the programme. Conducting successful practical sessions in projects such as soap and batik making depended on the availability of raw materials from outside the centre. One of the adult learners said: “We sometimes fail to make liquid soap as the centre lacks materials relevant for its production. We need chemicals and storage facilities.” Another one said: “We are required to make Batik products. But we sometimes fail to do our practical. We lack plain fabric, wax pens and batik process set.” It is not difficult to ascertain that inadequate funds meant incapacitating the efficiency of the practical training. Thus, limiting the skill development and hence limiting adult learners’ capacity to fulfil their economic motives.

Variations on learning needs

The study findings signal diversity on the needs of adult learners. Adult learners from one of the adult learning centres did not want to acquire basic literacy skills. They had little time to attend classes. In fact, they agreed to meet once a week. Their purpose was to meet as women and learn together what they perceived as potential to enhancing their socio-economic well-being. One of them said: “Our need is to know how to use our phones. We want to communicate with our people. But we need some basic tips. So, we have requested our teacher to find somebody to teach us that”. When one of the co-ordinators was asked to provide answers on this issue, she said the problem was common to them. They only helped by allocating a facilitator to address their need. Otherwise, one would not get adults to attend learning centres. Despite this being contrary to the need of ICBAE programme, it has attached values to the adult learners. Transformation such as this should be considered as they also sustain group learning.

The limiting learning environment

The findings from the study centres indicate that the environment was deprived of relevant resources. The potential learning resources were either inadequate or outdated. Batik making tools in some of the centres, for example, were old and of low quality to allow a competitive making of quality batik products. The findings also show that some of adult learning classes were being held in primary schools. The adults assumed classes in the afternoon and in some places in the evening to give space to pupils to complete their studies during regular class session. In this regard, adults had to contend with a schedule. Thus, inflexible learning schedule posed a challenge to adult who did not have time in the afternoon or evening hours. As a result, some of the adults missed classes. Furthermore, the adult learners had to conduct practical activities in open space as the rooms were not meant for supporting hands-on practices. One of the facilitators said:

We cannot do practical activities in the classes as we will inconvenience pupils who use classes during regular class hours. We utilise open space outside the classes for making batiks. Sometimes, we experience challenges as we need to store tools and chemicals in the school.

The absence of proper storage space created fear for the safety of the materials such as batiks, which had to be left out to dry. Implicitly, a good environment is supportive of the practical sessions for income generating projects. Hence, proper space and storage facilities are important to ensure successful practice and production. In fact, the current learning environment requires some improvement to maximize learning of adult learners.

Seasonal classes

The findings show that the participation of adults in learning was seasonal. There were two seasons—high season and low season. This was determined by the nature of economic activities occurring during the year. Facilitators said adults were engaged in agricultural activities that is planting and harvesting. During that period, they could hardly attend classes. It was not uncommon for adult learners to vacate their places for some time. They went to their farms and others were engaged in animal husbandry. They required time to find pastures for their animals. Another notable season was during their engagement within tourism activity. One of them said:

I sometimes lack time to engage fully in learning. I am a tour guide and once we have tourists around my company calls me and I attend to the needs of my clients. It is hard to adhere to my learning schedule. And this is more challenging when it is peak time for tourist such as the end of the year.

Such situations require a flexible learning schedule to accommodate the needs of adult learners and allow them to learn at their convenient time. However, the seasonal classes posed a barrier due to lack of consistency in learning.

Discussion

The study findings indicate that adult learners in ICBAE centres had both economic and social motives which influenced their participation in ICBAE programme. The economic motives aimed to increase and improve income earned and change the adult learners' economic status. Most of them had poor economic background and their enrolment in other words, adult education made special contributions to combating poverty and enhancing economic development (Carré, 2000; Hanemann, 2017; Rothes, Lemos and Gonçalves, 2014). The findings also show that adult learners desired to improve literacy skills to facilitate their activities in the world of work and business. The most striking feature meaning from this study was that adult learners studied to nurture an entrepreneurship culture existing in their community. Their participation in ICBAE was deeply embedded in enhance their cultural values of being successful businesspeople. As such, even their engagement in ICBAE was a way of developing basic literacy and income generating skills. On the other hand, adult learners had social motives, which included studying for recognition and prestige. This was associated with removal of an inferiority complex that could

disappear once they became literate individuals. Moreover, adult learners needed social interaction, group affiliation and a mechanism to cope with social challenges. Similarly, they wanted to create friends in socio-economic groups hitherto seen as untenable. The economic and social motives were not different from the motives recognised and acknowledged in literature (Mushi, 2010, 2012; Onchari, 2016; Rothes et al., 2014, 2017; Whitt, 1994).

The findings also show that adult learners experienced several challenges from ICBAE learning centres. The challenges included inadequacy of financial resources, untrained and under qualified facilitators, seasonal classes and limited learning environment. These challenges were detrimental to the learning of adult learners. Given the nature of learning environment, there was a dilemma in maximising learning potentials and fulfilling adult learners' learning desires. Successful learning is associated conducive teaching environment, supportive and well-resourced learning environment (Mohamed & Zulkipli, 2014; Spivey, 2016; Swai, 1999). This is contrary to the experiences drawn from learners and facilitators.

The use of volunteers though appreciated given the need to support adult learners was not highly effective as facilitators lacked potential adult facilitation skills. The use of qualified resourceful personnel would have enabled the adults to master skills and knowledge. Mastery of andragogical methods facilitates the proper learning of adults. The observed challenges were also found in other adult learning programmes in Tanzania (Bwatwa & Kamwela, 2010; Bhalalusesa 2004; Kway, 2016; Machumu et al., 2015; Msoroka, 2015; Mushi, 2012; Swai, 1999). Similar observations were also found in many other countries (Spivey, 2016). However, the seasonal learning pursued by adult learners was not compatible with the desired outcomes that could condemn the learner to relapsing into illiteracy and losing interest to learn.

The issues of not wanting to learn basic literacy skills from the classroom context were also new. In this regard, it is understandable that some adults are over-occupied with social and economic responsibilities. As such, mastery of numeracy, reading and writing was central for their day-to-day activities. Hence, demand for a simple learning such as understanding the use of mobile phone was not enough for removing illiteracy among adults. The study also noted that lack of equipment and facilities to support practical sessions were some of the pressing problems. These areas had potential to support income generating projects. The

absence of relevant learning resources was a challenge to the overall objective of ICBAE programme. The need to empower adults to develop skills for income generating projects was likely to dwindle. In fact, the fixed schedule blocked the demand for flexible learning schedule to accommodate their daily socio-economic activities (Carré, 2000; Whitt, 1994).

A proper intervention from the governmental, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), Community Based Organisations (CBOs), and individuals was necessary to amend the situation. Creating an enabling environment capable of supporting adult learners' realisation of their motives was vital for continuation and sustainability of ICBAE learning centres. The challenges discussed thus far could hinder the country from realising the Vision 2025, which aim to develop a learned information society (URT, 1999). It also challenges the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals 2030 particularly goal number 4, which seeks to enhance lifelong education opportunities for all (UNESCO, 2019). Moreover, strengthening capacity of centre facilitators and improving access to learning resources are pivotal for improving the adult learners' experiences in adult learning centres.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Overall, the study looked at the motives and challenges experienced by adult learners in ICBAE centres. The socio-economic motives served as impetus for adult learners' engagement in learning. Challenges included financial, physical and human resources. Thus, enabling adult learners to realise their motives is central to their success in learning. The challenges from adult learning centres can hardly support adult learners to accomplish their learning goals if not addressed properly. As such, strategic interventions suitable for improving adult learners' experiences in the learning centres should be instituted. Centre facilitators should be trained to understand adult psychology and master facilitation skills relevant for the development of adult learners. The government should also take a leading role to ensure adequate access to financial resources in ICBAE learning centres to sustain and support practical session and nurturing income generating projects. Education officers should also strengthen co-ordination of literacy and the income generating programmes to allow for proper provision of education to adult education in learning centres.

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